

FRIENDLY MESSENGER

January 2026

First Congregational Church, 1070 Pleasant Street, Worcester, MA 01602

Pastor T • Drop-in Pastor's Office Hours: By Appointment

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Hello Church!

As the calendar turns to January—the glow of Advent and Christmas still lingers. Throughout the season, we slowed ourselves just enough to listen—lighting candles, telling ancient stories in dramatic monologue, singing songs that have carried faith through centuries, and week by week remembering anew that Jesus shows up in the most unforeseen places, and through the most unexpected characters: a teenage virgin, a drummer boy, and two befuddled dads: Josef, and Zechariah.

Our Christmas Eve service felt especially holy this year. In candlelight and song, we proclaimed once again the astonishing truth that God chose vulnerability over power... a manger over a throne.

Thank you to all who made the season so very powerful and memorable- gifted musicians (pianist, organist, drummer, guitarist, saxophonist, trumpeter, violinist, and vocalists), readers, decorators, seamstresses, artists, carpenter, technicians and those who quietly prayed behind the scenes. Your faithfulness turned preparation into proclamation.

Now, we step into a new year, a month of steady faith. It asks us to carry the light of Christmas into ordinary days—into conversations, decisions, service, and care for one another.

This year will bring change—some expected, some not. But the good news remains the same: *"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."* -John 1:5.

May we be a people attentive to God's presence, courageous in love, and ready to follow wherever Christ leads. I can hardly wait to see what God is going to do here at Worcester FCC!

Grace and peace to you in this new year.

— Pastor T



Hospitality

Bring Your Special Touch!



Come and share your favorite snacks with us at Coffee Hour, which is held in the parlor every Sunday after our worship service! We make the coffee and other beverages and we supply the paper goods. All you have to do is bring some goodies. There's always a sign-up sheet on the table and two or more people can sign up together. We'd really appreciate your help!

"Hospitality is when someone feels at home in your presence."



Happy New Year! Can you believe that it's 2026?! It sure snuck up on me fast! I love the snow but I do NOT like the freezing weather that we've been having. In fact, I don't know anyone who does, do you? One thing that helps is mittens rather than gloves because your fingers are all together, keeping each other warm an' when your making snowballs, or snowmen, or an igloo, mittens are sooo much better. When I go into the house after playing out in the cold, I love a nice, hot cup of cocoa (with lots of marshmallows...hehehe), or if it's lunch time, a yummy cup of tomato soup with a grilled cheese sandwich.

Well, this month will be a long one so enjoy, stay warm and stay safe!

Joyful blessings,

Nick



Fantastic Fellowship Festivities

❄️ Join us on Wednesdays at 10:00 AM! ❄️

It's hard to tell what we'll be doing in this unpredictable weather but whatever it is, it's better than sitting at home. 😊

Gathering Our Thoughts in Prayer For



Marsha's friend's husband, **Theodore** and his family. Theodore's cancer has spread to his bones and he is going into Boston for treatment; **Kim**, who Debbi requests prayers for as she recovers from a traumatic leg injury; Ellen's nephew, **Tyler** and his family. Tyler is undergoing treatment for cancer; Connie's husband, **Mac** as he recovers, and also for her niece **Linda**; **Sue** requests continued prayers for her daughter, **Melanie**, her sister, **Lee**, and her brother, **Danny**; Members **Hampton, Dolores, Paul, Erika, Jane, Carol, Joyce & her husband, Armand**; Kristin's friend, **Mitch**; **World Peace**.

If you would like to add a prayer concern or update our list, please email the church office at office@fcc-worcester.org or call the office at 508-752-4635.

"Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God." — St. John Damascene



Hats & Mittens

Our sincere thanks to everyone who brought in hats and mittens for children at Tatnuck Magnet School, who need them. They truly appreciate them, especially with the cold weather we've been having.



"Even the strongest blizzards start with a single snowflake." — Sara Raasch

Communion Set

What a beautiful new Communion Set we have! If you weren't in church on Communion Sunday, I hope you'll be here to see it in February. Here's the very touching story behind it.

from Bobr
Ukrainian Artist
of the Communion Trays

I originally designed these trays for my church. Everyone liked them so much that I thought I'd try selling them to others. It turned into our small family business. I did the cutting and gluing. My wife did the staining, and my father helped with packaging and shipping.

Our lives changed dramatically when the war began. We had to leave, and our church community dispersed across different cities and countries. Even so, we still found ways to meet—some in Poland, some in Germany, and some now living in Spain, Norway, Brazil, and so on. Today, our people are spread all over the world.

As for our production, we are still making our trays in Kramatorsk, where we have someone managing everything on the ground and shipping them to different countries. But my wife and I are no longer in Kramatorsk—we had to leave because the city is too close to the front line, about 10 miles away, and it's dangerous to stay there. We now have small children, and we don't want to risk their lives or our own, so we made the difficult decision to relocate. At the moment, we are thinking about the future of our business—whether to move it farther from the front line, as the fighting continues to get closer. Everything is still uncertain, and we are waiting to see what path will be the safest and most viable.



Christmas Season at FCC Was Amazing!

Since it would take too long to describe what we did, I'll present it to you with the awesome photos that Nancy took for us.

Spreading Joy This
Blessed Season!



On The First Sunday of Every Month Deacons Fund

The Deacons Fund is a financial resource provided by churches to assist individuals and congregations in need during times of crisis. It typically offers temporary support for basic needs such as rent, utilities, and emergency expenses, emphasizing mutual care within the community. Thank you for your support!

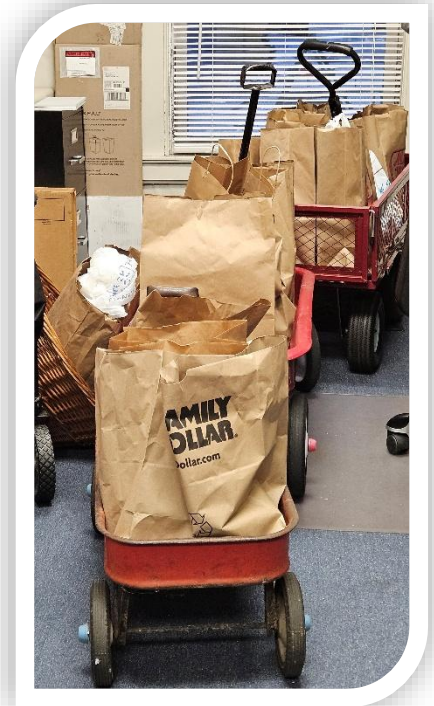
"Success in life has nothing to do with what you gain in life or accomplish for yourself. It's what you do for others." ~ Danny Thomas



Carty Cupboard Every Sunday

Thank you for making a difference in so many lives! Our cup runneth over with goodwill! How heart-warming! Pastor T. brings everything to Carty Cupboard for us, and we continue our mission. This "wagon Train" is just from one week!

Snacks like squeeze-up applesauce are fun and nutritious. Pudding, fruit, and Jello cups are good snacks, too. Granola bars provide a good source of energy and are quick to grab. Things like tuna fish, mac & cheese, beans, instant potatoes, hearty soup, shelf-safe milk, juice boxes, and condiments are some of the foods people can use. Besides food, they can also use personal care items and/or baby items.



Every
Donation
Makes A
Difference

"Giving is not just about making a donation. It is about making a difference."

– Kathy Calvin



January

10 Jackson McGrail 13 Melanie Anderson 25 John Hakkila

February

04 Richard Mason 10 Leanne Jezerski 12 Nancy Taylor
20 Scott Yonker 21 Laura Waters 22 William McGrail
23 Doug Perkins, Sr. 27 Connie MacInnes

- "A birthday is a time to count our blessings." – Leroy Brownlow



January

23 Phillip & Lorna Cardin

February

15 Rob & Kristen Olson

"May your hearts always be filled with love and your lives with happiness. Happy anniversary!"



Do you have something you'd like to see in our newsletter?



If you have some **news**, an **article**, or an **announcement** that you would like included in the newsletter, please leave it in the office with Sue Anderson or email her at deegram@charter.net or office@fcc-worcester.org by the **23rd of each month**.

See it here first!

If you would like a copy of the newsletter sent to you via email, please email the office and we'll add you to our list. There are also copies in the narthex that you can pick up. If you don't have an email address or can't get to church, send us your address and we'll be happy to send you a hard copy every month. You don't want to miss out!

Our Daily Bread

Pick up your copy from the bookcase in the narthex. There are no large print issues this month. Available right now is the December – January – February issue.

Accessibility Items Available for Worship!

Did you know that we offer large print bulletins? They are available in the narthex as you enter the sanctuary. If you don't see any there, just ask and we'll be happy to provide them. We also have hearing assistance devices that make hearing what is said at the pulpit much easier! They are in a basket on the table in the narthex.



Christmas Poinsettias ~ 2025

*Thank
you!*

A big thank you goes out to all who donated the beautiful poinsettias for Christmas!

The sanctuary looked lovely!

Dawn and Matthew Ahaesy

In Memory of The Ahaesy, Gibbs, Clark, & Harper families

Norman & Susan Anderson

*In Memory of loved ones who have gone before us,
In Celebration of the Season!*

Beverly Bean

In Celebration of the Season!

Marianne & Bob Bourgault

*In memory of John & Pauline Clukey
In honor of Roy & Betty Mae Bourgault*

Ellen Dalbeck

In Memory of Loved Ones

Debra Holmes

In Celebration of the Season!

Marsha Huntoon

In Memory of Gregory Lavallee

Leanne and Jim Jezerski

*In Memory of Pauline & William Greene, Clifford & Marjorie
Greene, Andrew & Catherine Campsie and Edward &
Evelyn Jezerski*

Connie & Milton MacInnes

*In Memory of Linwood, Alice & Lenny Hodgkins
In Honor of Dan, Katherine & Allen MacInnes*

Cindy MacLaurin

In Memory of Jean & Joan

Ralph Metcalf

In Memory of Elizabeth (Lamson) Metcalf

Ann Scherdell

*In memory of Ray & Jeffrey Scherdell
In Memory of my Parents, Ken & Doris Sundholm*

Donna Spaulding

*In Memory of Our Loved Ones & Benji
In Honor of Parker, born on November 20th*

Erika Vecsey

In Memory of Loved Ones



Friday

09 1:00 pm Trustee's Meeting (*Conference Room*)

Sunday

11 10:00 am Worship Service with 🎵 🔔 *Krystal Bells* 🔔 🎵 (*Sanctuary*)

11:30 am Deacons Meeting (*Conference Room*)

Wednesday

14 10:00 am Fellowship

Friday

16 **ANNUAL REPORTS DUE TODAY!!**

Sunday

18 10:00 am Worship Service (*Sanctuary*)

Wednesday

21 10:00 am Fellowship (*parlor*)

Sunday

25 10:00 am Worship Service (*Sanctuary*)

11:30 am Council Meeting (*Conference Room*)

Wednesday

29 10:00 am Fellowship

